policies and that the Government will have to come up with policies which encourage competition and allow free play of market dynamics. It has also recommended that the Finance Ministry should also come up with incentives as has already been done for encouraging the telecom sector. The Government will also have to focus on the long term strategic aspect like the development of skilled manpower. If these are done, it will be possible for the Indian telecom industry to emerge as global player and for the Indian domestic market to grow at an explosive rate.

(c) In pursuance of the National Telecom Policy 1994, the Government of India has already invited Indian Registered private companies to participate in Telecom Services Sector in a competitive environment. The Finance Ministry has also announced Telecom Sector as Infrastructure and consequential fiscal incentives.

[Translation]

Problem of Power in Delhi

406. SHRI JAI PRAKASH AGARWAL :
SHRI RANJIB BISWAL :

Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government have received some schemes/proposals/memoranda from Delhi Government during last three years till date for solving the problem of power in Delhi;

(b) if so, the details therefore;

(c) the amount of assistance provided to the Government of Delhi for this purpose during each of the last three years;

(d) the manner in which Delhi Government has utilised the amount of assistance and the achievements made in this regard; and

(e) the details of the schemes/proposals/memoranda under consideration of the Government alongwith the time by which they are likely to be finalised ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH) . (a) to (e) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

[English]

Issuance of Life Time Free Travel Passes

407. SHRI MOHAN RAWALE : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Railway Board has taken a decision to allow life-time free and endless AC first class travel to retired members of the Board and their families;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reasons and justification thereof;

(d) whether the Federation of Railway Officers Association has passed a resolution requesting the Railway Board to rethink on the Platinum Pass privilege and speedy withdrawal of the same; and

(e) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto ?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) and (b) Retired Board Members are issued Complimentary card passes which entitle them to travel alongwith eligible members of their family or a companion subject to the condition that they will not avail more than 2 berths in I-AC or 2 seats in Executive Class. In case of Rajdhani Express trains they can avail either 2 berths in I-AC/AC Sleeper or four berths in 3 AC.

(c) These facilities are granted in token of appreciation of the contribution made by the Retired Board Members to Indian Railways and are in lieu of the three post retirement complimentary cheque passes to which they were eligible annually.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) The scheme has been evolved after due consideration of all the issues. It is not considered desirable to revoke it.

[Translation]

Separate Corporation for Speed Post Service

408. SHRIMATI PURNIMA VERMA :
SHRI RAMESHWAR PATIDAR :

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to set up any separate corporation for Speed Post Service;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the efficiency of general post distribution is being affected due to stress on speed post; and

(d) if so, the manner in which the Government ensure the regular postal distribution ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) No, Sir, there is no proposal to set up a separate corporation for Speed Post Service. With effect from 1, 2, 1996 Business Development Directorate has been set up and this looks after the premium products including Speed Post.

(b) In view of reply at (a) above, does not arise.

(c) No, the General Postal distribution is not affected due to stress on Speed Post.

(d) In view of reply at (c) above, does not arise.

[English]

Subsidy for Small Hydro Projects

409. PROF. P.J. KURIEN : Will the Minister of NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government are providing subsidy for small hydro projects in hilly areas;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of the States included in the scheme;

(d) the reasons for excluding some States;

(e) whether some State Governments have made requests to the Union Government for their inclusion in the scheme; and

(f) if so, the details thereof and the action taken thereon ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (CAPT. JAI NARAYAN PRASAD NISHAD) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Ministry of Non-Conventional Energy Sources provides financial assistance for undertaking feasibility studies and implementation of small hydro projects upto 3 MW station capacity, all over the country, including the hilly areas. 100% financial assistance is provided for conducting survey and investigations, and 50% for DPR preparation. Interest subsidy upto Rs. 1.12 crore/MW is provided for commercial projects, and capital subsidy of Rs. 15,000/KW for projects upto 100 KW capacity. Higher capital subsidy of upto Rs. 3 crore/MW is provided for projects in the North Eastern States.

(c) and (d) All the States/UTs are covered under the various schemes. However, the hilly regions of Jammu & Kashmir, U.P., Himachal Pradesh, West Bengal, Sikkim, North Eastern States, and A&N Islands, are provided higher subsidy in view of higher capital costs on account of remoteness and difficult logistics of such areas.

(e) No, Sir.

(f) Does not arise.

N.H.P.C.

410. DR. KRUPASINDHU BHOI : Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state :

(a) the Power Projects which are being executed by the National Hydro-electric Power Corporation (NHPC) at present.

(b) the capacity of each of such hydro-electric project;

(c) whether some of those power projects are likely to be completed by the end of 1997-98; and

(d) the time by which the other ongoing hydro-power projects are likely to be completed ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH) : (a) and (b) Three Hydro-Electric Project namely Dulhasti (3x130 MW) in Jammu & Kashmir, Rangit (3x20 MW) in Sikkim and Dhauliganga (4x70 MW) in Uttar Pradesh are under execution at present by national Hydro-electric Power Corporation (NHPC). The work on the Koel Karo Hydro-electric Project (710 MW) in Bihar could not be started due to paucity of funds and local resistance. The Kurichu Hydro-electric Project (3x15 MW) in Bhutan and the Kalpong Hydro-electric Project (2.25 MW) in Andaman and Nicobar Islands are also being executed by NHPC on deposit basis.